

# **Executive Summary**

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## **LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

The IL 336 project is a re-evaluation of a corridor study for a modern transportation facility in west-central Illinois. The study area covers portions of Peoria, Fulton and McDonough Counties and extends from I 474 westward to either US 67 near Macomb or the proposed Macomb bypass, a distance of about 60 miles. On the south the study area is bounded by the Illinois River from Peoria to about the intersection of US 24 and 136; from there it extends due west. The northern study boundary includes IL 116, IL 78 and IL 9.

The study area is primarily rural agricultural. The cities near the termini, Macomb (population 18,558) and Peoria (population 112,936), are the economic and population centers for McDonough and Peoria Counties. Canton (population 15,288), near the middle of the project area, is the economic and population center for Fulton County.

## **HISTORY OF THE PROJECT**

This project began in 1969, with the passage of state legislation for major highway improvements statewide, including a supplemental freeway, FA 407, from Peoria to Quincy. A corridor study was completed in 1970 and included that portion of the supplemental freeway area from Peoria to IL 61 near the town of Tennessee in McDonough County. Three corridors, A, B, and C, were evaluated, and Corridor A was selected. A draft EIS for the portion of Corridor A from Peoria to Canton was begun in the mid-1970s, but the study was suspended in 1979.

The FA 407 corridor was also included in three feasibility studies for a highway between Chicago and Kansas City, in 1968, 1974, and 1990. All three studies concluded that the highway could be feasible.

In 1998, the 336 Coalition, a group of concerned citizens, business people, and local government representatives, was formed to promote the study and construction of a four-lane highway from Peoria to Macomb.

The three corridors from the 1970s study, with a new terminus at Macomb, are re-evaluated in this study.

## **PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT**

If constructed, the project will provide a modern transportation facility from Peoria to Macomb, which will be the final link in a highway system providing western Illinois and its communities greater access to each other and to the regional interstate highway and expressway systems. Other related approved projects in various stages from design to completion are as follows:

- US 67 from Macomb to Monmouth.
- US 67 from Macomb to Alton.

# Executive Summary

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- IL 336 from Quincy to Macomb.

In addition, the Macomb bypass, a freeway currently under study, would connect all these routes, including IL 336 from Peoria to Macomb.

This current IL 336 project is a regional link that will serve present and future travel needs, and complete the highway network. The current project will also help provide economic stability to this area, which is in economic decline due to loss of mining and manufacturing jobs; and will provide improved travel efficiency and safety.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Elimination of Corridor C

Some initial adjustments were made to the 1970s corridors, primarily to provide logical termini within the current highway system and to avoid major community impacts. The corridors studied in detail are shown in Exhibit ES-1.

A detailed assessment of the three corridors resulted in the conclusion that either Corridor A or B was far preferable to Corridor C, and therefore Corridor C was eliminated from further study. The major reasons for eliminating Corridor C are:

- It is substantially higher in cost than either Corridor A or B.
- It ranks lowest for system linkage and travel efficiency.
- It does not serve either Canton or Macomb well.
- If Corridor C is selected, improvements will still be needed on IL 116 between Peoria and Farmington.
- Corridor C has the highest potential for impacts to Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) properties, archaeological resources, wetlands, floodplains, streams, and threatened and endangered species.
- It has an estimated 30 percent more relocations required than either of the other two corridors.
- It has very little public support.
- It offers no substantive advantages over Corridors A and B for other items evaluated.

# Executive Summary

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## Results of Comparisons of Corridors AA, AB, and BB

After Corridor C was eliminated, Corridors A and B were evaluated in more detail. In addition to Corridors A and B, a combination of the two was considered: the eastern part of Corridor A combined with the western part of Corridor B (Corridor AB). Corridor BA was not considered. Once Canton is bypassed to the south (B east), using the western part of Corridor A merely adds travel because of the necessity of going back north. For this analysis, Corridor A was designated as AA, and Corridor B as BB. Selected bands and associated impacts in each of these corridors were analyzed. The results are summarized in Table ES-1. As shown in the table, impacts and benefits overall are fairly similar for the three corridors.

Corridor AB is recommended for the following reasons:

- It has the greatest public support.
- It's preferable from a traffic standpoint. In the east, if Corridor B is selected, IL 116 west of Hanna City will require capacity improvements. If Corridor A is selected, other capacity improvements in the study area will not be needed. In the west, there is more traffic in the south and central part of the study area than in the north, and the western part of B better accommodates it, particularly the Cuba-to-Canton traffic.
- It provides access to Farmington.
- It can use about 6 miles of existing railroad right-of-way. Corridor B is almost all new right-of-way.
- It is the corridor that was selected by IDOT and FHWA in the 1970s and there are no changed conditions great enough to make other corridors preferable to it now.

As shown in Exhibit ES-2, some further adjustments were made to the recommended corridor. Where the A and B sections were joined near Canton, a now superfluous area northwest of Canton was eliminated, and the corridor was widened to the east to provide for alignments east of the Canton Airport. A small addition was made on the east end of the corridor to accommodate potential future expansion at the Peoria Airport.